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THE KEY METHOD

of

TEACHING THE MECHANICAL PHASE OF

PRIMARY READING

BY

KATHLYNE J. LIBBY

OF THE MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL EDUCATION COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

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TO THE TEACHERS

For years pointing fingers have been turned toward the primary department as the source and cause of the poor reading of the pupils in the upper grades and high school.

Among these may be found many primary teachers. Not that they feel that they are wholly to blame, or that they have utterly failed in their work. No, far from it. It is doubtful if the teachers in any other grade expend as much time, energy, and thought on the teaching of reading as they do, and often with the happiest of results. But they feel that it seems a reasonable theory to hold, that if a child could be under the best possible instruction for, say the first three years of his school life, the teachers of the advanced grades, if they did their part well, could no longer blame the primary teachers for the poor reading of their pupils.

It must be granted that of a *necessity* there is a phase in the teaching of reading which is purely mechanical, and that this phase has been much abused, either by its total neglect, or by its over-use. This mechanical phase must not be over-indulged in, neither must it be neglected. Danger lurks in either extreme.

We find on one hand, teachers who are grinding, grinding, grinding until the whole schoolroom atmosphere is suggestive of a huge machine, and the pupils merely the cogs in the wheels, never developing into anything greater or rising to a higher plane. We view this with deep disappointment and then turn to others

to find them soaring, soaring, soaring, carrying their pupils with them, and we watch their flight in breathless amazement, only to meet with an even deeper disappointment when they suddenly fall down, down, down to almost the same level at which they started their flight.

Again we find to our infinite satisfaction, teachers who are neither grinding nor soaring; teachers who are thoro, but not mechanical; who teach their little ones to fly, but who first know the strength of the little wings. Each day these little wings are so strengthened that each day the flight is a little higher, and there is no cruel, unexpected fall, but a steady, strong flight to the heights desired. These teachers neither neglect nor over-indulge in the mechanical phase of their work.

Let us then have *two* periods for the teaching of reading, one strengthening the other. One period to be devoted to helping the children to help themselves, when the technical drills, and active, strenuous work must be done, and the other, the regular reading period, full of untasted pleasures, and where thot getting and thot expressing are uppermost.

It is for the first period, or mechanical phase, that this pamphlet was written.

It is safe to say that at least a considerable proportion of the children who enter school are cut off from an educational career at an early age, either because of poverty or because they have lost interest in their school work. It is especially true that as pupils advance in the grades they lose interest in reading. When this occurs, it is generally accompanied by failure in arithmetic, geography, etc. The pupil cannot read a problem understandingly, and consequently he cannot solve it. The

same is true in geography and history, he stumbles over the reading of the lesson so that he cannot get the thot and hence fails in the reproduction. All this is due to the fact that he is powerless to make out new words. When thus hampered by meeting new obstacles in the shape of unknown words, he gropes about blindly, cannot get the thot and cannot express it.

Occasionally we find a fluent reader, who is not an expressive reader, but such cases are rare. If a child does not become a fairly good and fluent reader during the first three or four years of his school life, he rarely acquires it later, for this is the time when he not only has the greatest ability, but also the greatest desire to learn. Ought we not, then, to do all we can for him at this time in teaching him to become self-reliant and able to help himself? Ought he not to be given a key to the language, and to be taught how to turn this key in the lock? For many years we thot we were doing all we could for these children when we taught them the use of the diacritical markings. They became quite expert in making out new words when the teacher was there to mark them. They could use the dictionary with ease, and those who were not indolent did so.

But how was it with the new book, newspaper or story book at *home* which fell into their hands?

Were our fluent readers of whom we were so proud in the *schoolroom*, who could make out any new word as soon as we added the "diacritical bandages," were they able to help themselves when they were left with no "word surgeon" to apply the proper "bandages," and no dictionary to which to refer? No, almost invariably, when faced with new matter, they were helpless when separated from teacher and dictionary.

In this pamphlet, a method is shown, by means of which children can become fairly good, fluent, independent readers in from five to six months' time.

This is accomplished by means of *keys* or *sound groups*. Its success depends upon a thoro knowledge of the long and short vowel sounds; the consonant sounds; the blending of the short sound with the consonant sound into a *short key*; the effect on the short key when final *e* is added, thus making it into a *long key*; the blending of the consonants into *consonant keys* and the learning of *sight keys*.

These points are not hard to teach children if introduced thru the powerful medium of *games*. Children will learn things thru games sooner than thru any other means. The game may be of the simplest character imaginable, but it will serve its purpose well. In fact, the children become so interested in phonic games that the teacher wonders where the time has gone, so pleasantly and fast has the time flown.

Just as soon as possible the keys in the key period should be applied to the new words which will occur in the next reading lesson. Thus the children will see and realize the value of these little keys and will become greatly interested, as their greatest ambition is to be able to read.

When these points are learned, they have a complete key to the language, and no matter how early they may leave school, *their ability to help themselves is assured*. As fine readers, they may lack the finishing touches a teacher's art is supposed to lend, but they are not *helpless*. They have developed an independence which has reacted upon their characters.

It is also true that children who have had good,

strong thoro work in keys, have had their eyes so well trained that they rarely make slovenly mistakes like calling *this*, *these*, or *has*, *his*. Likewise because of this training, where ear and eye are both trained, they become good spellers.

This key work is not by any means to be allowed to supplant the use of the dictionary later on, but there can be no doubt, however, that it should precede dictionary work. In the latter part of the second year they can learn the use of diacritical markings and in the third year take up the use of the dictionary and do stronger and more intelligent work with it than they otherwise could. The "dictionary habit" can then be cultivated and its value instilled in their mind by the teachers of this and the grades following. At the same time, the key work should not be dropped. Every new word should first be made out by the key method in the higher grades, and then reference made to the dictionary for accent and meaning.

Any teacher who intends to take up this key method in teaching the mechanical phase of reading, must first become so thoroly acquainted with the keys herself that when her eyes rest upon a word it will become instantly separated into keys without any apparent effort.

This is the power she plans to give her children, and she cannot impart that which she has not herself.

The best plan by which she may thus become conversant with the keys, is to read over the method thoughtfully; study how the keys are formed; then take a newspaper and as she reads underscore each key. In a half-hour's time she will have acquired the desired facility in *seeing keys*.

But above all else, she must remember this in her teaching—"Haste makes waste."

Naturally she can hardly wait for results and in her great desire to see how much power her little ones have she may be tempted to crowd the work and hasten over steps without sufficient drill. She must learn to *clinch* each point before she leaves it, or she may suddenly find her children in the midst of dire confusion. Go slowly and drill thoroly. Let this be her guide.

Drilling thoroly does not mean worrying the children; but it does mean the reviewing of each new step in a variety of interesting games and devices in such a happy way that the children will enjoy becoming thoro in each step before a new step is taken.

The teacher must be *sure* that every child knows thoroly every short vowel and consonant, because upon these two points hinges the success of the method.

With beginner classes in first grade, these two steps can seldom be covered in less than eight weeks. But when once accomplished there will be few if any snags to prevent smooth sailing and every lesson will show new strength in the children.

Second or third grade children who are taking up the key method for the first time, can often master the whole method and become independent in six-weeks time; for it has several times been tried. They will not need to spend as much time on the various steps, as beginner first grade children will.

It has proven a great aid in teaching English, both spoken and written, to non-English-speaking children. In fact, it is invaluable to them. In five months they have become fairly conversant with the written and spoken English thru the use of the key method.

If the first three steps and the twelfth step as outlined in this method are thoroly mastered, it will eliminate the committing to memory of numberless keys; and, if the pupil should chance to forget a key, he will have the means at his command to make it out for himself, e. g.: A child may forget that a-b-e is *abe*, he know what *a* says *ă*, and he knows what *b* says. He then blends the two sounds and forms the short key *ab*; he also knows the effect of final *e* on a short key, so he instantly sees that it is not the short key *ab*, but is the long key, *abe*.

The term *key* is used to indicate a group of sounds as they occur in the formation of words. It was chosen because it was a term which seemed to directly appeal to the children. They were impressed with the idea of possessing keys to the "word-houses"; and being able to turn these keys in locks and open the doors of the "word-houses." In other words, pronounce the new words by means of these keys. When the term *key* was first presented the children hailed it with glee.

Short keys are the keys formed by the blending of a short vowel and a consonant, e. g.: *ab*, *eb*, *ib*, *ob*, *ub*, etc.

Long keys are the keys formed by adding final *e* to the short keys and thus changing the short vowel sound to the long vowel sound, e. g.: *abe*, *ibe*, *obe*, etc.

Consonant keys are the keys formed by blending two or more consonants, e. g.: *br*, *cr*, *str*, *bl*, *y*, etc.

Sight keys are those which cannot be made out by sound, and which must be learned by sight, e. g.: *ight*, *sion*, *ew*, etc.

Notice that in the list of keys given later, some of the keys are underlined. This is done simply to im-

press upon the children that such keys say more than one thing, it helps them to remember the fact.

When in teaching keys, you come to such keys, simply tell the children what two things the key says, e. g.: "ag says aḡ and it says ag, too, sometimes."

In reviewing such keys ask what *two* things *ag* says.

Provision is thus made for the different vowel sounds. Study the list of keys having more than one sound. Remember it is unnecessary to teach all of those in this list. Select only those which commonly occur in the early vocabulary and when necessary teach others.

As has been said before, connect all key work with the reading vocabulary as early as possible, in order that the children may see the value of the work and realize that it is going to help them to be able to read.

In presenting words to classes to make out for themselves, after they have covered all the steps as outlined, there is no reason why they should be limited to *small* words. In fact, it is a very good plan to *often* give them words to make out, which are much beyond their grade, as it will afford an opportunity to test their power, and when a child once feels he has such power, he will not be daunted by any large word with which he may come in contact. He will as boldly attack the word *cancellation* as he will the word *broke*; and succeed too, as has been many times proven. Very often we see children in advanced grades hesitate, and then give up the pronouncing of a new word, simply because it is *long*. So the plan of frequently giving the little children long words to make out, cultivates courage, and makes them feel their own power.

For several days before the formal key work is taken up, it is an excellent plan to accustom the children to the blending of consonants and a key or keys, by giving them "Ear Puzzles," e. g.: Teacher sounds, "I s-aw a b-ig r-at r-un un-d-er the b-ar-n floor." Children listen and repeat, saying, "I saw a big rat run under the barn floor."

After this work, boldly start in with the regular work as outlined here, being determined to succeed and to progress slowly and thoroly, making sure that each step strengthens the next one and success will reward you in the course of a few months.

OUTLINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KEY METHOD

I. Teaching of short vowel sounds.

II. Teaching of consonant sounds.

III. Teaching of short keys made by blending short vowel sounds with consonant sounds.

IV. Teaching children to make out words containing one short key, preceded by a single consonant, e. g.: Family groups, as cat, rat, fat, hat, etc.

V. Teaching the consonant keys made by blending two or more consonants.

a. Blending of consonants with *r*, e. g.: br, cr, dr, etc.

b. Blending of consonants with *l*, e. g.: bl, cl, dl, etc.

Note.—Show here that final *e* does not change the sound of these keys, e. g.: ble, cle, dle, etc.

c. Blending of consonants with short *y*, e. g.: by, cy, etc.

d. Blending of consonants with long *y*, e. g.: by, cy, etc.

e. Blending of several consonants, e. g.: str, scr, etc.

VI. Teaching the children to *find* and *underline* the *keys* in words which only contain short keys and consonant keys, e. g.: black, crack, patter, matter, crawl, straw.

VII. Teaching the children to sound these words and pronounce them after finding and underlining the keys.

VIII. Teaching them to *see* the keys without pointing them out or underlining them, and then sounding and pronouncing them silently and thus independently.

IX. There are many sight keys which the children must know before they can be perfectly independent, e. g.: ight, aw, other, oy. It is not necessary to teach all of these at one time. Select such keys to teach at this time as will occur in the vocabulary which they will be expected to use in their *early* reading.

X. Repeat steps 6, 7, and 8, being careful to omit any words containing *long* keys, or any *sight* keys.

XI. Teach the long vowel sounds.

XII. Teach the long keys made by adding final *e* to a short key. Dwell on the effect of the final *e* on the short vowels and on the consonant sounds of *c*, *g*, and *s*.

XIII. Repeat steps 6, 7, and 8, only being careful to avoid any words containing unknown sight keys.

XIV. Teach remainder of sight keys.

XV. Repeat steps 6, 7, and 8, avoiding *no* word, as now the children have the power to cope with *any* word.

XVI. Teach accent mark if desired.

Note.—Carry on this key work in script and print simultaneously, and the children will thus unconsciously make the transition to print and be ready for books. ✓

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KEY METHOD

STEP I. TEACHING OF THE SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

Teach them by association with some simple story or suggestive picture. Any other devices which the teacher may have will be just as good and perhaps better than the ones given here. These stories are simply suggestive.

This is perhaps the most difficult step of all to teach, and it seldom can be taught to beginner first grade children thoroly in less than four weeks of diligent work, and *thoro* it *must* be.

SUGGESTIVE STORIES

Short a.

1. Once upon a time a dear little baby came to live in a certain house. Her name was ā, and her mamma always called her ā, too.

The baby heard her own name more times than any other word, and she used to often *think* her name as she lay in her little cradle.

By and by she grew old enough to try to talk, and the first thing she tried to say was her own name. She tried very hard to say it, and her mamma helped her all she could, but the nearest sound the baby could make to her own name was ā.

You may play you are the mamma and that I am

the baby. You tell me to say a, and I will say it the way the baby did. Try hard now, to make me say it!

Now, let us play I am the mamma, and you are the baby. I will try to teach you to say ā and you say ā the way the baby did.

Short e

There was once an old, old man, who earned his living by mending shoes. He was so old he could not hear very well. In fact, he could scarcely hear at all.

He had a very funny way, when he could not hear, of putting his hand behind his ear, to catch the sound, and saying "ě?".

When people wanted to have him mend their shoes they would have to say what they wanted over to him many times; and each time a little louder than before. Then each time he would place his hand behind his ear and say "ě?".

At last, if he couldn't hear them, he would call his children to tell him. Now there was something strange about their names. They all began with ě, the same sound he made, when he couldn't hear. Now listen, and I will call them. "Emma! Eddie! Ethel! Esther! Eva! Edwin! Elmer!"

Let us play deaf-man. You be the deaf-man, John, and these seven children may be Emma, Eddie, Ethel, Esther, Eva, Edwin, and Elmer. Run out in the hall until your father calls you. I will be the customer who wants some shoes mended.

The children love this game and it is a sure way of teaching short e, which is usually hard to teach.

Short i

Here is a picture of a baby mouse. Isn't he a little thing?

His lungs are not strong, for he has never been taught to breathe deeply; so his voice is very low.

Hark! Here comes an old cat! She sees our baby mouse, she wants to catch him, but she can't for he has dodged into that little hole over there in the floor.

Did you hear him squeak as he went into the hole? He said "i." Very low and very short, as he is not a strong mouse you know.

Joseph, play you are the mouse, and I'll be the old cat. Run when you see me coming and make a noise like the one this little mouse made.

Short o

One time a little boy did a very naughty, naughty thing. He knew it was naughty, because a little voice kept saying, "You naughty little boy."

He tried to run away from the little voice, but he *couldn't*. It still kept whispering, "Oh, you naughty boy!"

Just as he was running around the corner, he ran right against a big policeman. Oh, how frightened he was! Shut your ears until I snap my fingers, then open your eyes and ears and see how the little boy looked and hear what he said. You know he was *so* surprised to see the policeman.

Here the teacher assumes a look of utter surprise and astonishment. Opening her eyes and mouth wide and as the children open their eyes, she says "ö!" She requests the children to look as she did and repeat the sound she made. Call it the *surprise* sound.

"Of course the policeman didn't touch the little boy, but he ran home saying 'ö' all the way, and thinking how he would never repeat his naughty act."

Make this short o story into a game.

Short u

Teacher lifts a heavy book, a heavy pail of water, or a heavy boy, with apparent effort; as she does so she says "u".

Let us try lifting something and saying "u".

SUGGESTIVE DRILLS

1. Refer to the sounds in this way: "What did the baby say? What did the little mouse say? What did the deaf man say? What did the naughty boy say? What did you say when you lifted that heavy book?"

When they forget a short sound, when written on board, refer to the story which you told to teach the sound, e. g., Sarah forgets what short o says. Teacher says, "What was the surprise sound, Sarah?"

Note.—Present the script representation of each sound on the board as you develop it, so that they will associate the sound, story and symbol.

2. Write the short vowel sounds promiscuously on the board; and let the children play they are walking down a certain street; and that these little sounds are their friends to whom they must speak.

Tell them they must be *sure* to call them by their right names; as it might offend them, to be called by the wrong name.

Give the child a pointer and let her point to each one; and as she points say, "Good morning, ä; Good morning ü," etc.

See how many can do it.

3. Draw several five-pointed stars on the board and place a short vowel sound on each point for drill.

4. Draw a pansy and on each petal place a short vowel sound for drill.

5. Let them trace around their own hands and name each finger a short vowel sound.

STEP II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSONANTS

This step can easily be covered with beginner first grade children in about four weeks.

It also must be very thoroly done, as upon steps one and two depends largely the success of all the following work. Very little time is needed for the following steps, if these two are well cared for. To take up the subsequent steps before these two are thoroly learned, means to have to drop all work later on, and come back to the work planned for these first two steps, and do it all over again.

In teaching consonants the teacher may use any device she chooses, as d, the sound the dove makes; f, the sound of the spitting cat, etc.

.Drill thoroly and test in every conceivable way.

SUGGESTIVE DRILLS

I. Jack and the Beanstalk Game

Directions for this game are found in the directions for making a chart, which are given at the end of this pamphlet.

2. The Merry Go Round

Directions may be found for this game, under directions for making a chart which are given at the end of this pamphlet.

3. Frog Pond

Draw a circle on the floor to represent a frog pond.

Place the children around it, and give them each a card with a consonant on it. Let each child jump onto a "make-believe" stone in the center, and as he jumps give the sound of the consonant on his card.

Note.—This can be played in step four, too. Write a short key in the center where the stone is to be. Suppose the short key to be *an*. Each child holds his consonant in his hand, if it will make a word when sounded with *an*, he remains in his place. If not, he withdraws from the circle until another key is placed on the stone.

If his consonant will make a word when blended with *an*, he remains; and when his turn comes he jumps to the center and says "f-an, fan," another says "c-an, can," and so on until all the words are made.

As each child announces his word, the teacher writes it on the board.

4. Another Game

is described under the teaching of sight keys in step nine.

Having prepared the cards as there directed, simply *tell* the children what the key is to the right of the card.

Arrange the children in a circle.

Number them.

Hold up the card and as you expose a consonant, as *b*, No. 1 says "b-at, bat"; expose *c*, No. 2 says, "c-at, cat," and so on around the class.

If No. 1 should miss his word, he must go into the center; if he watches, and can sound the word given to someone else before that one does, he may do so, without permission, and thus get back into the circle.

This game is a general favorite.

STEP III. THE TEACHING OF SHORT KEYS MADE BY BLENDING THE SHORT VOW- EL SOUNDS WITH CONSONANT SOUNDS CONSTITUTES THIS STEP.

It is a most delightful one and the ease with which the children take it, will fully repay the teacher for the hard, thoro work she has done in the first two steps.

It can be accomplished with ease in three fifteen or twenty minute lessons. However, this should be borne in mind, that it must be frequently reviewed. I, myself, never let a day pass, without reviewing it with the class. It can be done in two minutes and is well worth while.

Plan to teach all the short keys, beginning with short *a*, then all with short *e*, short *i*, short *o*, and lastly short *u*.

Any device the teacher may have for developing this step can be used. It is well to have a number of devices; for, where one device may appeal to *part* of the class, it may not appeal to *all*.

One device is here suggested which has proven a success.

Say to the children as you write a large *a* on the board, "Children, do you know who this is? I wonder if you would like to hear of a baby party that *ă* once attended?"

[The breve over the *a* is not by any means to be placed on the board or even taught to the children. It is used here simply for the benefit of the teacher, in order that the explanation of this device may be more lucid. Whenever it is used it indicates that the teacher should refer to the letter by *sound*, and sound only. Diacritical marks are not to be taught until the dictionary work is begun in the third or fourth grades.]

"Once upon a time *ă* had a party, there were ever so many babies invited, all of whom you know. As each baby came, *ă* would meet it at the door, take its hand, and toddle into the house. As they went, each would tell the other its name. They said the names so closely together that they sounded like a little word. I am going to draw a big house on the board and draw a picture of *ă* and his friends as they walk together. I want to see if you can say their names closely enough together to make a little word. Always say the name of *ă* first.

"There! Isn't that a fine, large house? Here is *ă*, with his first little guest. Who is it?"

[Here the teacher sketches a large house and writes *ab* inside.] "Now listen, while I sound their names as they did, then you may try to do it too." [Teacher sound *ă-b*, *ab*, writes *ac*, *ack*, *ad*, *af*, etc., and sounds them, then the children try. If you have a timid class,

let them sound in concert, then be *sure* to follow this with *individual* work.]

The short keys to be taught in this step are ab, ac, ack, *ad, af, *ag, al, am, an, ap, *as, at, av, ax, az; eb, ec, eck, *ed, ef, eg, el, em, en, ep, *es, et, ev, ex, ez; ib, ic, ick, id, if, ig, il, im, in, ip, *is, it, iv, ix, iz; ob, oc, ock, od, *of, og, ol, *om, *on, op, os, ot, ov, ox, oz; and ub, uc, uck, ud, uf, ug, ul, um, un, up, us, ut, uv, ux, uz.

Do not teach ar, er, ir, or, ur, aw, ew, ow, ay, ey, oy, and uy, until you have taught the others.

Then you may take up two or three of these in one lesson and teach them as sight keys. Simply tell the children that when a, e, i, o, u, walk with r, they say something which will *catch* them if they do not look out. The children like to have the teacher say, "Look out! Here is where you will get caught, if your eyes are not good!" whenever they review these keys.

In teaching aw, ew, ow, ay, ey, oy, uy, it has been found best to teach them in family groups or by analogy, e. g.: "This little key is named aw. See, I am going to write it five times, everytime I write it, you tell me what it is. Now I am going to put *c* in front of the first one. Now sound it this way. [Teacher sounds it.] Who can tell what it sounded like?" Do this until you get the whole family on the board as caw, law, paw, raw, saw.

Put pointers in the hands of the children, and ask them to *listen* well, and find the words you ask for, as, raw, law, paw, caw, saw. This makes them listen for the consonant.

The short keys which are marked with a star,

should, on the board, have two lines drawn underneath them to indicate that they say *two* things. It is not necessary to explain to the children about it, in fact confusion is avoided, if you simply tell them, "This key says *two* things, a \bar{g} (as in wagon) and a \hat{g} (as in magic), and whenever we see it, we must remember it says *two* things."

When the children have learned to blend the vowels with the consonants, always in reviewing, for a time, have them sound the short keys before pronouncing, e. g.: a-b, ab; e-b, eb; e-c, ec, etc. This teaches them to sound the key, so that should they ever forget that *a-b* is *ab*, they can sound it and find out for themselves. Should they forget, just say to them, "What does the baby say? Now what does b say? Sound them close together."

Right here, I would say, there is no harm whatever in speaking of the letters by their names. Do not emphasize the names of the letters but refer to them incidentally. Before you are aware of it, the children will have learned the alphabet.

Now get some pieces of cardboard and sketch and cut out of it, some large old-fashioned common door keys.

On each door key write in large script or print with rubber stamps, the short keys. One short key on each cardboard door key.

Have a large wire key ring at least eighteen inches in diameter, made by a tinner, or make it yourself.

Fasten all the cardboard keys on the ring, in the order in which they were developed.

Tell the children that these keys are keys which will open "word-houses"; and that as soon as they know

them, they can try to unlock these "word-houses." Turn rapidly on ring for drill.

Another good Game is to cut some cardboard into oblongs 4x6 inches.

On some of these cards write short keys, one key on a card, e. g.: an, ed.

On others write family words as can, Dan, fan, man, Nan, pan, ran, tan, van, bed, fed, led, Ned, red, Ted, wed.

Distribute the key cards to certain children. Let them stand up in front of the room, facing the children in the seats, and holding their cards in full view.

Pass the word-cards to the children in the seats.

Teacher then says, "Poor little children! You are lost, aren't you? There are you mammas over there, Run find them."

Instantly the children holding word cards run to the front of the room and group themselves in straight rows behind the mamma who holds the key to his word, e. g., children holding word cards, can, fan, man, stand behind the child holding the key card *an*; and those holding word cards bed, red, led, etc., stand behind the child holding the key card *ed*.

For variety pass the key cards to the weakest children and the word cards to the others. Let those who hold key cards pass among the children and find all their families, e. g.: Child holding key card *ar* touches all the children lightly on the head who hold these word cards, far, bar, car, tar, etc. As she touches each one, he passes to the front and stands with others of his family.

Again, after they are all picked out, see if the mamma can name her children; that is, pronounce the word

each child holds! or, the mamma may call for different words to come to her, and each child must know his word, and the mamma sees if he is right when he comes.

They are now ready for the next step.

STEP IV. TEACHING CHILDREN TO MAKE OUT WORDS CONTAINING ONE SHORT KEY AND PRECEDED BY A SINGLE CONSONANT

Tell the children that you are going to play you own lots of houses, and that they are going to rent them. There is a house for each child, but the doors are all locked and each child will be given a key, which will unlock the house he is to live in.

Either cut small carboard houses and place them in a row along the blackboard, or draw a row of houses on the board. In each house write one word which is composed of one short key, preceded by a single consonant, e. g., bat, cat, fat, hat, mat, Nat, pat, rat, sat, vat.

Tell the children you will open the first door, and see if they can open the next ones. Tell them this: "It will be easy to open these houses because the keys are all alike! My key is *at*, I must open the first word-house; now, watch me do it, b-at, bat!" [Teacher sounds bat as indicated.] "Open the next one, children, all take hold of the key together and turn it! Ready! Do it with me." [Teacher points to *c* and then to *at*, and as she points, the class says "c-at, cat."]

"Good! Now, who wants to try the next house? Mary may." [Teacher points to each part and Mary sounds it.] Try first one child and then another. Do not *force* any child to do it and do not scold.

Children *must be happy* in this work, and it will depend upon you whether they are or not. Make the lesson so full of joy and spirit that the child will be anxious to volunteer to try. If he fails to blend the word, do not make him feel disgraced because of his failure; rather, say, "Good, John, you *tried*, that is *almost* right, you will be stronger *next* time; listen to Abraham while he tries it. By and by you may try again." Forget yourself, and be a child with them, make them feel that you are as anxious that they should get each word as they are.

After taking up a few family groups in this way, make it just a little more difficult, by arranging the word-houses like this, pig, cow, man, Ned, run, etc.

Teacher names the key and children volunteer to give the word or "unlock the door," e. g.: "The first key is *ig*; open the door, Lena." Lena says, "p-*ig*, pig." Teacher says, "The next key is *ow*; open the door, Jacob." Jacob says, "c-*ow*, cow."

When all doors have been opened review the words rapidly, sounding only when one is not readily recognized.

Tell the children to play that each house contains a different family. See how many can remember who lives in each house, e. g.; "Pig lives in this house, cow lives in this house, man lives in this house."

The children enjoy this lesson hugely.

By and by write easy sentences on the card houses or blackboard houses, one word on a house, e. g., Ned

is a big boy. Let them make out the words and then read the sentence.

This will delight them and also make them see how the keys will help them to learn to read.

When they realize this, they will begin to feel the strength of their little wings and will want to fly. The interest in the key lesson will be unbounded. For the height of every child's ambition is to be able to read. And it is right here that you can increase that desire, by reciting beautiful, attractive memory gems, telling and reading interesting stories and never failing to let them know, that when they know their keys and learn how to use them they can find out all the secrets in the beautiful books, and read these same stories and gems for themselves.

Associate the key work with the reading every time there is an opportunity.

STEPV. TEACHING THE BLENDING OF TWO OR MORE CONSONANTS.

There are five subdivisions to this step. Teachers will experience little or no difficulty in teaching a. Blending of consonants with *r*, e. g.: br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr, etc.; b. Blending of consonants with *l*, e. g.: bl, cl, dl, fl, etc. c. Blending of several consonants, e. g.: spr, str, etc. The children unconsciously do this themselves and but for the weak ones, no drill would be necessary. However, spend but little time on it, as the children pick it up for themselves.

In subdivisions c and d, they *may* possibly meet with some difficulty, it will depend entirely on how well they

know the long and short sounds of y, and how proficient they are in blending sounds.

Let the children know that you think this is quite a hard step. For they have now arrived at the stage where it amuses them to have you give them something to do *which you think is hard*. They like to surprise you by showing you how quickly they get it. Do not fail to let them see how much you appreciate their efforts and rejoice with them in their success. Let them *know* you are *proud* of them.

When they have mastered both c and d, write all these keys, by, cy, dy, fy, etc., and see if they can tell you which ones say two things, and what it is they say.

Add the keys formed in step five to the cardboard cards on the key ring and drill as before.

STEPS VI AND VII. IN THIS STEP THERE IS A DECIDED GROWTH TOWARD INDE- PENDENCE AS WILL BE SEEN.

Longer words may now be taken to "find out," as the children say.

Look thru the blackboard stories you intend to give, also thru the primers you intend to use and select all words from their vocabularies that you will expect the children to use.

In selecting them, take only words which contain *short* keys and either single or blended consonants as taught in steps three and five. Be careful in this, because children must not meet with obstacles in the "finding out" of words, in the shape of unknown keys. The work must be of a steady, logical growth with care-

ful applications of principles. The child must not be discouraged by meeting with strange keys as his interest will wane, just as it does when he is trying to read and is constantly coming in contact with unknown words, which he cannot make out. Do not lose sight of the *child* in this work or in any other. Place yourself in the child's place and look at things from *his standpoint*, then you will not be tempted to crowd him in his work. Remember this—"Slow but sure."

The rapidity and ease with which the children will take hold of the more difficult work, later on, when they are ready for it, will amply repay you for your patience.

Having selected your words take the simplest ones first to make out. Be sure to have words enough so that there will be one for each child.

Suppose this to be your list: Fred, draw, spin, shop, drum, drummer, softly.

Write *Fred* on the board, tell them you wish some one could see the key to this word-house for you. Encourage them to look from left to right for keys, but should they chance to see the key *ed* before they do *Fr*, do not refuse to take it, but gladly accept it. If no one sees the keys, find the hardest one yourself and underline it carefully, thus, Fred. Someone will be sure to see the next key, which is *ed*; let him point to it and name it, and the class repeat the name. You will then underline it as you did the first key, thus, Fred.

Call on someone to tell you both keys, beginning at the left.

Let class sound the word in concert at least twice and pronounce it, e. g., "Fr-ed, Fred."

Write the next word, draw, on the board.

Call for keys; let one child find, point to, and name

one; class repeat it; teacher underline it; another child find, point to and name another key; class repeat it, and teacher underline it; call on one child to sound it; while class sounds it and pronounces.

Repeat this work until all the words are on the blackboard and have all been dealt with alike.

In a word like softly, it will be marked thus, softly, and sounded s-of-t-ly.

Hand a pointer to a child and let him pass to the board, point to the first word and as he points to the keys sound the word thus, "Fr-ed, Fred." The next child takes the pointer and pointing to each key, sounds, "dr-aw, draw," and so on down thru the class.

If a child fails on a word, simply check the word and proceed. At close of word take up the word or words so checked and dispose of them again as you did at first.

Now write all these words which have been developed in this lesson on the board again, but in different order. Do not mark the keys; see how many can recognize them unmarked.

Continue work in steps six and seven until you feel sure that your children have sufficient facility to help themselves, then take up the next step.

STEP VIII. TEACHING THEM TO *SEE* THE KEYS WITHOUT HAVING THEM POINT-ED OUT OR UNDERLINED, AND THEN SOUNDING AND PRONOUNCING THE WORD.

Begin by giving them simple words like dog, bark, hop,, and tell them to try to *see* the key and then sound and pronounce the word to *themselves*, without help.

Call on someone to sound and pronounce it *aloud*.

Take a harder word, e. g., bonnet.

Work on this step until you feel *sure* the children are not in any way *leaning upon the underlining of keys* to help them, then advance to step nine.

STEP IX. TEACHING OF SIGHT KEYS WHICH WILL BE NEEDED IN EARLY READING WORK.

Again go thru the blackboard stories and primers and select all keys which must be learned by sight, which occur in the words of these vocabularies.

Suppose these keys to be ought, other, ight, ing, oi, etc.

Present the first four in lists of words, family words.

In teaching *oi*, simply recall to the children the key *oy*, which they learned in step three. Write them together on the blackboard and say, "These two keys

say the *same* thing." It will be unnecessary to give a list of words containing *oi*, simply associate it with *oy*. Many sight keys can thus be associated and much time saved in the teaching of them, e. g.: ought and aught; ow and ou; ay, ai and *ey. In the case of *ey* say, "This says two things, *ā* and *ĭ*."

Teach only as many in each lesson as your class can grasp. Place them on the blackboard in a long row.

Tell them a story about a great snow-storm where the snow was blown into great drifts on a railroad track between here and Chicago. Tell them how necessary it was for the trains to get thru to Chicago; how all the strongest engines with the strongest snow-plows were brought out; how hard it was to get thru some drifts and how much harder thru others. Tell them how sometimes an engine would get thru several drifts and then come to one big drift which would be so hard to get thru that the engine would have to back up, take more steam and try again; and when it did get thru to Chicago, how glad all the people were.

Draw a long railroad track across the top of the board; on it write the sight keys. Call the sight keys snow drifts.

On another board or on a large sheet of paper draw a large engine.

Let the children play they are engines working their way thru many deep snow drifts. Every child who is a strong enough engine to get thru all the drifts to Chicago, may have his name written on the cab of the engine which was drawn on the board or paper.

Let each child have the privilege of backing up three times, that is, trying again. If he then fails to get

thru, another child may try, and he who failed may try again the next day.

There are many, many games which make this otherwise difficult step of teaching sight keys, easy. Here is one—

DROP THE KEY

Arrange class in circle as in Drop the Handkerchief, and conduct the game as in that. Instead of using a handkerchief, drop a card upon which is written a sight key. Drop a different key each time.

If a child finds a key behind him, he is to pick it up and quickly naming the key, as "ight," pursue the one who dropped it. If caught, the one who dropped it goes to the center. If a child should find a key behind him and not know its name, he will have to go into the center and work his way out by alertness, as in the original game of Drop the Handkerchief.

Another plan is to prepare a number of cardboards 6x9 inches; at the right write or print a sight key, as *ight*. At the left fasten ten sheets of paper of uniform size, 3x6 inches, onto the cardboard with a paper-fastener. On each of the 3x6 papers write or print one of the following ten consonants, f, l, m, n, r, s, t.

In using these, first have class name the key at the right, which is on the cardboard. Then quickly call on different members of the class to sound and pronounce each word as you expose a new consonant or key at the left.

Aim for accuracy and rapidity.

First child will say, "f-ight, fight"; next, "l-ight, light"; "br-ight, bright."

This device saves much blackboard space and labor.

When the selected sight keys are learned, take step ten.

STEP X. MAKING OUT OF WORDS COMPOSED OF SHORT KEYS, CONSONANT KEYS AND SIGHT KEYS.

Select words from blackboard stories and primers to be used, being careful to omit any words containing unknown keys.

Repeat steps six, seven and eight.

STEP XI. TEACHING THE LONG VOWEL SOUNDS.

No device is necessary in teaching the long vowel sounds.

Place the vowels on the board and find out how many know the *names* of them. Nearly always the children know. Drill on these names, and if you wish, call them the *long* sounds, in two minutes' time this will be learned.

Select list of words containing long and short vowels; as you read them let the children say "long," "short," as the case may be, e. g.: Teacher reads, "bed," Children say, "short sound." Teacher reads, "lace." Children say, "long sound," and so on thru the list.

STEP XII. TEACHING THE EFFECT ON THE VOWEL SOUND AND ON THE CONSONANTS C, G, AND S, OF A SHORT KEY, WHEN FINAL *E* IS ADDED. IN OTHER WORDS, THE FORMING OF LONG KEYS.

Tell the children that when an *e* is placed at the end of a short key, it makes the vowel stronger and it says its own name, and so the key becomes a *long* key. Tell them that c, g, and s get stronger too, when final *e* is added, but not as strong as the vowels, for they get strong enough to say their names plainly, by c, g, and s only get strong enough to say something else, and that this is what they say. Give them these sounds of ç, g, and s.

Drill on sounding all the keys when final *e* is added, e. g., "a-be, abe; a-çe, ace; a-fe, afe." Do not mention silent letters in teaching this. However, later on, when the last step has been taken, reference can be made to silent letters, but not here.

Drill thoroly on this step as much depends upon it.

STEP XIII

Repeat step ten, only being careful to omit words containing unknown sight keys.

STEP XIV

Teach remainder of sight keys and as many of the other sounds which they may have as you see fit and may need in your work.

For instance, *ere* says *ere* in *here*, it says *er* in *were* and *air* in *where*. These three sounds will be needed in your work so they must be taught. Teach them to say "here, were, where," afterwards write these words on the board and drill on them, then say "Who can tell me how many things this key e-r-e says?" writing the key on the board. Drill thoroly.

STEP XV.

Now the children are ready to cope with any words, and the children love to work them out. The harder and longer the word, the more delight is taken in the work.

They will become so interested in the work, that the parents become interested and the children frequently bring in sentences or words which their parents have written and sent in to be tried by the class.

Give them daily drills in reviewing all keys from a chart, directions for making of which are given at the end of the pamphlet. Let them make out new words every day; follow steps 6, 7, and 8, only select any word you wish. Suppose the words to be made out are Milwaukee, Boston, cancellation, interesting.

Call for the keys and underline them. When the first word is marked, it will look like this: Milwaukee.

The third word will look like this: cancellation.

The fourth word like this: interesting.

At this stage of the work children have a tendency to combine short keys into longer keys, and combine vowel sounds with consonant keys, as in the word interesting. The key is *est*. There is no harm in this.

In the word Boston. If the children give the key *on* as *õn*, just say "What else does that key say?" and they will say on [*un*].

Action Puzzles form a good game at this time.

Place several keys on the board and drill on them, as *ain*, *ir*, *un*, *ap*, etc. Later add other letters and keys to them forming a word; as train, bird, hunt, happy, etc.

Children must sound a word and pronounce it silently, as soon as a child knows it; then he must try to *act* it in some way, so as to show the others what the word is. He must not *speak* the word.

The others guess what it is and try to find it on the board.

Do this with all the words. The children love it.

Give the children columns of words from old newspapers, books, etc., or kectograph copies for them of lists of words having different keys. Let the children mark these keys for seat work.

Let them pick out and write all the words they can find containing a certain key.

When children arrive at this stage in the key work, the reading lesson becomes a joy instead of a dreaded feature. Instead of spending the period in word drills, as is too often the case, the period may be devoted to its true purpose—Reading. Work in expression may be taken up, and the lesson will be full of hitherto untasted pleasures. It is surprising, the amount of reading material the children will be able to master in a short time.

By means of a printing press (a \$1.50 rubber stamp outfit), which consists of the capital and small letters, large enough to be seen across the room, and which are

made of rubber and glued to small wooden blocks, by which they may be easily used in connection with an ink pad, the script and print work with the keys may be carried on together. The children thus make the transition from script to print with scarcely an effort; and by the time the keys are all learned they will read print with as much ease as script.

These printing presses may be obtained from the publishers of this book at a cost of \$1.50. They are well worth the money as they can be used in many ways and every school would find one helpful.

Directions are given here for making a key chart which is just as essential in a school room as books and maps. It is easily made and very convenient; saves blackboard space and much labor.

The material needed consists of large sheets of strong paper or cardboard, 24x48 inches is the best size. The sheets should either be bound together or holes punched in the upper corners, and suspended by cords. The latter plan is preferable, as the different sheets may then be taken out and drilled upon, and the other sheets hung where they may be used for seat-work, which will be explained later.

A bottle of black ink and one of red will be needed, also a No. 8 artist's paint brush and a printing press.

A few pages may be made interesting and attractive to children and serve good purpose when drilling on consonant sounds, by sketching a picture, on the chart suggestive of the key used, e. g.; Sketch an old woman leaning on a cane as she walks, and underneath write the key *old* in bold script. Use the rubber end of a lead pencil for this if you have no rubber pen. Sketch the old lady in black ink with the artist's brush.

Now write the key *old* seven times in a row. Before each one of these keys write in red ink, so that they will better stand out before the children, the consonants b, c, f, g, h, s and t. Thus forming a family of words.

Other pages may be made with an illustration suggestive of other keys, as *eat*, a boy eating from bowl with spoon; *owl*, an owl on a tree; *oat*, a spray of oats.

In using these pages, sound and pronounce the words, then review just the red consonants.

Another page which is very useful for the same purpose is called "Jack and the Beanstalk."

Draw a long bean vine, place consonant sounds on the leaves, and let the children play they are Jack and climb to the top, to the giant's castle and down again. As he climbs he must name the consonants.

For a drill on all the consonants and the vowels, draw a large circle and write the consonants and vowels, which represent ponies, all around it. The children like to play this is a "Merry Go Round" and ride around, sounding each consonant as they go.

Rule the remaining pages in oblongs and write or print, the print is more desirable, all the keys given here. Print them in the order given. Underline those having more than one sound, as many times as the number of sounds you teach.

TABLE OF KEYS

SHORT KEYS

ă	ě	ĩ	ö	ũ
ab	eb	ib	ob	ub
ac	ec	ic	oc	uc
ack	eck	ick	ock	uck
ad*	ed*	id	od	ud
af	ef	if	of*	uf
ag*	eg	ig	og	ug
al	el	il	ol	ul
am	em	im	om*	um
an	en	in	on*	un
ap	ep	ip	op	up
as*	es*	is*	os*	us*
at	et	it	ot	ut
av	ev	iv	ov	uv
ax	ex	ix	ox	ux
az	ez	iz	oz	uz
ar*	er*	ir*	or*	ur*
aw	ew	——	ow	——
ay	ey*	——	oy	uy

CONSONANT KEYS

br	cr	dr	fr	gr
pr	tr	wr	——	——
by*	cy*	dy*	fy*	gy*
hy*	ly*	my*	ny*	py
ry*	sy*	ty*	vy	——
bl	cl	dl	fl	gl
tl	——	——	——	——

LONG KEYS

ā	ē	ī	ō	ū
abe	——	ibe	obe	ube
ace	ece	ice	oce	uce
ade	ede	ide	ode	ude
afe	——	ife	——	——
age	——	——	——	uge
ake	——	ike	oke	uke
ale	——	ile	ole	ule
ame	eme	ime	ome*	ume
ane	ene	ine	one*	une
ape	——	ipe	ope	upe
are*	ere*	ire	ore	ure
ase*	ese	ise	ose	use*
ate	ete	ite	ote	ute
ave*	eve	ive	ove*	uve
aze	eze	ize	oze	uze

SIGHT KEYS

ow*	ou*	ai	ay	ey*
au	aw	aught	ought	all*
oy	oi	air	eir	ere*
are*	sh	ch*	ph	gh
ight	ite	ull*	ass*	ast
ng	tian	tion	sion	ion
ei	ee	ea*	ease	ie*
alk	qu	other	ew	ue
ough*	ald	alt	eigh	igh
ang	eng	ing	ong*	ung
and	end	ind*	ond	und
adge	edge	idge	odge	udge
ane	ain	aist	aste	ui
oo*	ician	ation	ition	able
ible	oble	uble		

Some of the following keys have more than one sound, as has been indicated in the table of keys, by the star placed at the right, e. g., ad*, ed*, ag*. Remember to teach only those you will need in your early work. Leave the rest until needed, that is, until you come to a word which contains a key having a sound not previously taught.

1. ad as in bad.
ad as in squad.
2. of as in soft.
of as in of.
3. ag as in wag.
ag as in magic.
4. on as in wagon.
on as in Don.
5. as as in has.
as as in past.
6. er as in her.
er as in errand.
7. are as in bare.
are as in are.
8. ere as in here.
ere as in where.
ere as in were.
9. ase as in chase.
ase as in phase.
10. use as in use.
use as in abuse.
11. ave as in save.
ave as in have.
12. ove as in love.
ove as in stove.

13. ome as in home.
ome as in some.
14. one as in one.
one as in stone.
15. ald as in scald.
16. alt as in salt.
17. eigh as in weigh.
18. igh as in high.
19. ey as in they.
ey as in money.
20. all as in call.
all as in shall.
21. ch as in cheese.
ch as in choir
ch as in Michigan.
22. ull as in full.
ull as in gull.
23. ie as in niece.
ie as in Jennie.
ie as in pie.
24. ough as in though.
ough as in rough.
ough as in through.
25. ind as in wind.
ind as in bind.
26. ong as in song.
ong as in among.
27. ass as in grass.
28. ast as in mast.

29. ow as in cow.
ow as in throw.
30. ed as in bed.
ed as in washed.
31. ar as in car.
ar as in Harold.
ar as in quarrel.
32. or as in for.
or as in glory.
33. uy as in buy.
34. ea as in eat.
ea as in breast.
35. ician as in musician.
36. by as in baby.
by as in by.
37. cy as in fancy.
cy as in cypress.
38. dy as in dye.
dy as in candy.
39. fy as in taffy.
fy as in defy.
40. sy as in Topsy.
sy as in noisy.
41. ry as in sorry.
42. gy as in buggy.
gy as in Gyp.
43. ou as in sour.
ou as in trouble.

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